

# Kurume History Walks

## No.20 Korasan Kogoishi – Ancient mountain fortress Shiseki Korasan Kogoishi 史跡 高良山神籠石

It is a National Historic Site designated on November 14th, 1953. The designated area was expanded on December 25, 1976 and on October 9, 1989



In front of the Daigaku-Inari-jinja Shrine

### ■ About the Kogoishi

*Kogoishi* is a collective term that refers to remains of ancient stones arranged in row. For a long time, what they were was a mystery. Today, we consider that they were the ancient mountain fortresses.

In Kurume, we have “Korasan Kogoishi” in Mt. Kora (Korasan), a sanctuary where the Kora-taisha Shrine has existed since ancient times.

The oldest document in which Kogoishi appeared is *the Color painting on silk of the History of the Kora Tamatare-gu Shrine*\*, seemingly drawn in Medieval

Japan (1185-1573).

Another ancient document, *the Mystical book of the Kora Tamatare-gu Shrine*, described that there were two particular stones on the approach to the shrine: the one was a deity’s dwelling rock that used to be called *Kogoishi* at the time (today’s Bateiseki), and the other was the remains of arranged stones.

\*Today’s Kora-taisha Shrine



Color painting on silk of the History of the Kora Tamatare-gu Shrine

In 1898, Kobayashi Shojiro introduced those arranged stones by the name of Kogoishi in an academic journal. (Since then, those names have been confused. In addition, Kogoishi became an academic term to indicate those arranged stones.) Researchers took notice of them and many other similar remains in northern Kyushu. In 1900, Yagi Sosaburo defined that it was a mountain fortress after the investigation on another remains. But in 1902, Kita Sadakichi denied Sosaburo's theory, and presented it as a border of the sacred area. The controversies had carried on. Finally in 1962, for the first time, an excavation research was held on the Otsuboyama Kogoishi, in Saga prefecture. As a result, they concluded that it was the mountain fortress.

#### ■ Korasan Kogoishi

It surrounds the west side of Mt. Kora, passing behind the Kora-taisha Shrine and around five peaks and two valleys. All stone are 80-90 centimeters on a side. A total of the confirmed Kogoishi rows totally me is about 1,500 meters. The inside area is approximately 355,000 square meters. In a valley, it was equipped with a water gate of which the foundation was found.

We estimate that the undiscovered part had existed above the Mino active Fault and had collapsed due to seismic activity with a magnitude of 7 in 679.



Bateiseki

(Detail)



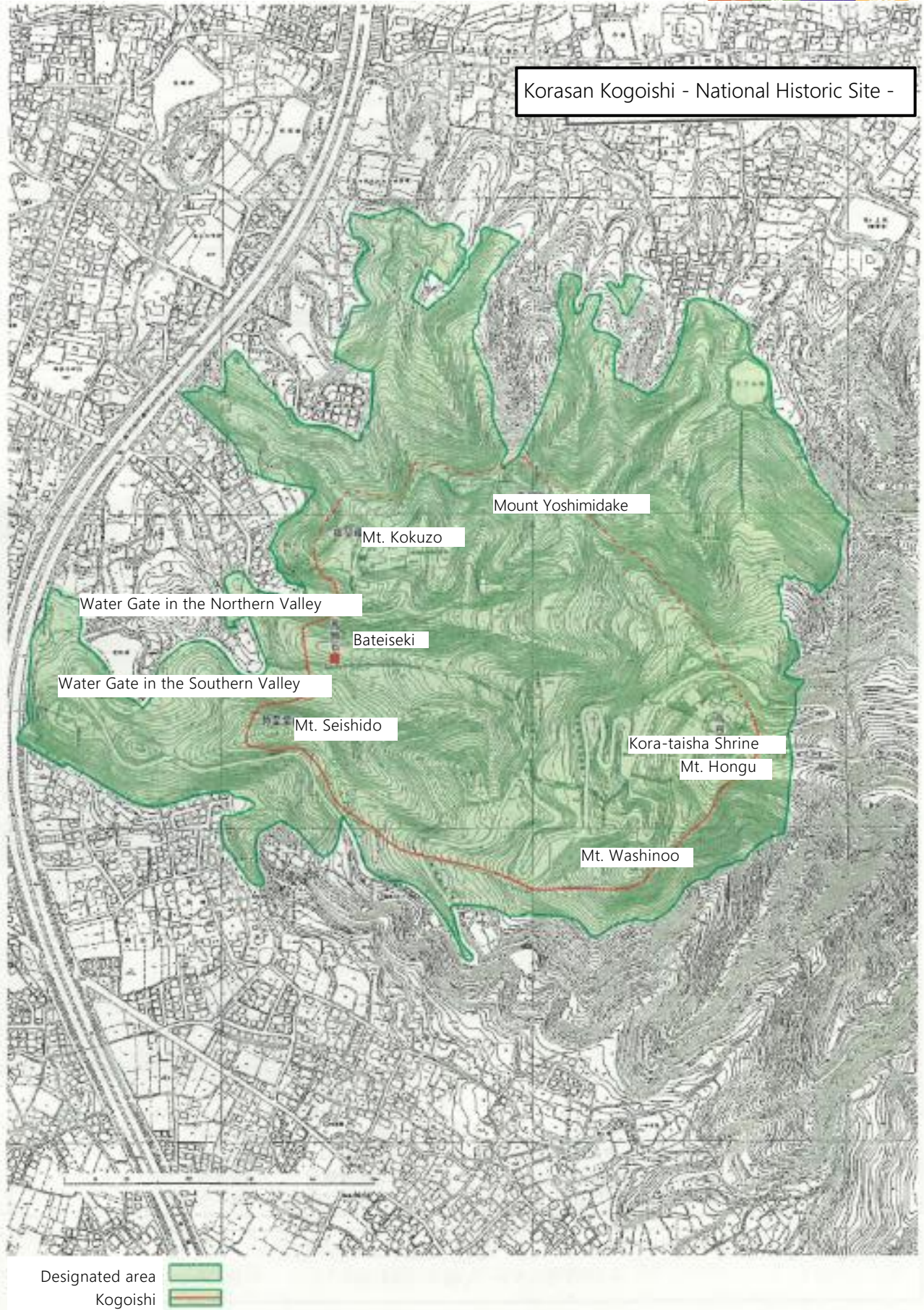
Remains of a water gate at the Southern Valley



Near Mt. Seishido



Behind the Kora-taisha Shrine



## ■ Construction years

Twenty-six remains of the ancient mountain fortresses were discovered in Japan. They are categorized into two styles: “Korean” and “Kogoishi”.

The former was the mountain fortress, which was described in “*The Chronicles of Japan* (completed in 720)” and “*The Chronicle of Japan, Continued* (completed in 797)”. Japanese army hastily constructed these fortresses as the defense bases against Silla-Tang (Korea-China) allied forces after Japan’s loss in the Battle of Baekgang in 663.

The latter does not appear in any ancient document. Its construction period is neither yet known. However, some researchers believe that the following sentence in “*The Chronicles of Japan*” is proof that the Kogoishi already existed at that time, since it contains the word “repair”:

〈Article of 658〉

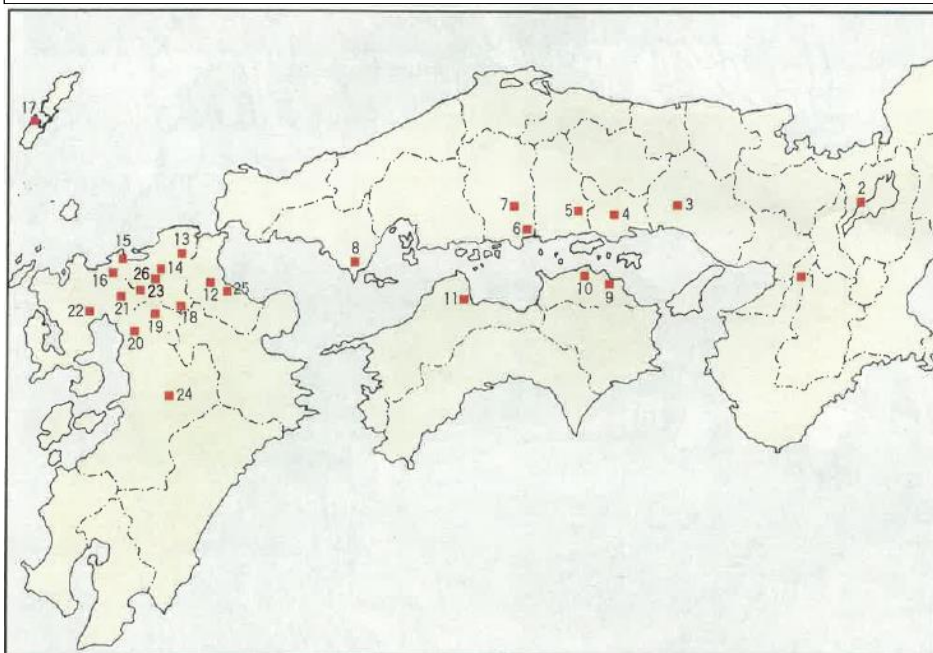
The army line up on a bank in the northwest  
Repair the fence of the castle

Thus, cutting off the mountains and rivers.

### List of the ancient mountain castles

Number. Castle Name: Location

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Takayasu Jo: Heguricho, Ikomagun, Nara pref.                 | 14. Ono Jo: Dazaifushi and Onojoshi, Fukuoka pref.       |
| 2. Mio no Ki: Takashimashi, Shiga pref.                         | 15. Ito Jo: Itoshimashi, Fukuoka pref.                   |
| 3. Kinoyama Jo: Tatsunoshi, Hyogo pref                          | 16. Raizan Kogoishi: Itoshimashi, Fukuoka pref.          |
| 4. Omeguri-Komeguri Sanjo: Higashiku, Okayamashi, Okayama pref. | 17. Kaneda Jo: Tsushimashi, Nagasaki pref.               |
| 5. Kinojosan: Sojashi, Okayama pref.                            | 18. Haki Kogoishi: Asakurashi, Fukuoka pref.             |
| 6. Ibara Ki: Fukuyamashi, Hiroshima pref.                       | 19. Korasan Kogoishi: Kurumeshi Fukuoka pref.            |
| 7. Tsune Ki: Fukuyamashi, Hiroshima pref.                       | 20. Zoyama Kogoishi: Miyamashi, Fukuoka pref.            |
| 8. Iwakisan Kogoishi: Hikarishi, Yamaguchi pref.                | 21. Obukumayama Kogoishi: Sagashi, Saga pref.            |
| 9. Yashima Jo: Takamatsushi, Kagawa pref.                       | 22. Otsuboyama Kogoishi: Takeoshi, Saga pref.            |
| 10. Kiyama Jo: Sakaideshi, Kagawa pref.                         | 23. Kii Jo: Kiyamamachi, Miyakigun, Saga pref.           |
| 11. Eino Sanjo: Saijoshi, Ehime pref.                           | 24. Kikuchi Jo: Yamagashi and Kikuchishi, Kumamoto pref. |
| 12. Goshogatani Kogoishi: Yukuhashishi, Fukuoka pref.           | 25. Tobaru Kogoishi: Kogemachi Chikujogun, Fukuoka pref. |
| 13. Kagenoma Kogoishi: Izukashi, Fukuoka pref.                  | 26. Ashikisan Jo: Chikushinoshi, Fukuoka pref.           |



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